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Compassion to Men's Souls the greatest Charity; and the Necessity of a Subscription for the Support and Relief of Missionaries.

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SERMON,

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FOR THE BENEFIT OF

THE INCORPORATED SOCIETY

FOR THE

Propagation of the Gospel in foreign Parts;

IN CONSEQUENCE OF

The LORD BISHOP of WORCESTER's CIRCULAR LETTER

TO THE

CLERGY of his DIOCESE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author, aware of incurring the Imputation of Vanity in thus preſuming to appear before the PUBLIC EYE; *wiſhes to obviate ſuch Cenſure, by aſſigning the following Reaſons for the Publication of this Diſcourſe.*

Being a zealous Well-wiſher to that moſt laudable Society, for whoſe Benefit it was preached, and not having it in his Power fully to ſatisfy thoſe Wiſhes by the Aſſiſtance of his PURSE, *he was induced to try what might be done, by that of his* PEN—*hoping that he might incite others to that Liberality, which he wanted the Means to exert, himſelf.—The Satisfaction his Attempt gave to the few, who heard it, when pronounced from the* PULPIT, *emboldened him to hope it might find no very unfavourable Reception, when delivered from the* PRESS. *With this Apology he humbly ſubmits it to the Peruſal of the candid Reader, who will naturally excuſe the Weakneſs of the* EXECUTION *for the Goodneſs of the* DESIGN; *and inſtead of looking upon it as a Work*

a Work of OSTENTATION, *will rather conſider it as a* "LABOR OF LOVE."

Conſcious that his Subject might have been treated in a more argumentative and ſcholaſtic Manner, he begs Leave to add, that PLAINNESS *and* SIMPLICITY *ſeemed peculiar Requiſites for that Kind of Audience, for which alone it was primarily deſigned; and that in his humble Opinion, the artleſs Voice of Perſuaſion has a greater Prevalence over the Generality of Mankind, than all the Force of elaborate Reaſoning and ſyllogiſtic Proof.*

A SERMON, &c.

MATTHEW, Chap. IX. Ver. 36, 37, 38.

When he ſaw the Multitudes, he was moved with Compaſſion on them, becauſe they fainted, and were ſcattered abroad, as Sheep having no Shepherd. Then ſaith he unto his Diſciples, The Harveſt truly is plenteous, but the Labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harveſt, that he will ſend forth Labourers into his Harveſt.

IN whatever Light we conſider CHARITY, either with Regard to the preſent Benefit of Society, or the eternal Intereſt of Individuals; the Honor of Chriſt's Religion, or the Glory of God; it will appear to be a Star of the firſt Magnitude in the Conſtellation of Chriſtian Virtues. It conſtitutes the very Eſſence of the Religion of Chriſt, and is the expreſs Image of

the Deity himſelf;—and has this peculiar Advantage, that, whilſt it diſpenſes Happineſs here on Earth to our Fellow Creatures, "it worketh for ourſelves a far more "exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory, reſerved in "Heaven for us, which fadeth not away."

Now if CHARITY, when extended only to the Relief of the *bodily* Diſtreſſes of Mankind, ſparkles with ſuch peculiar Luſtre, how much more brilliant and glorious muſt it ſhine, when employed in diſpenſing "Light and "Life" to the *Soul!*" to give to thoſe that "ſit in Dark-"neſs and the Shadow of Death" the "Light of the Goſ-"pel, and the Bread of Life;"—to uſher in "the Day-"Spring from on high," and guide the wandering Soul, out of the mazy Miſts of Ignorance and Error, into "the Way "that leads to everlaſting Life," muſt be the higheſt and beſt Exertions of Charity and Love.—To extend God's Dominion over HEATHENS and INFIDELS; to "make his "Ways known upon Earth, his ſaving Health among all "Nations," muſt not only be the greateſt Kindneſs to our Fellow Creatures, but alſo the higheſt Honor we can do to God; and conſequently the greateſt Glory and Good we can procure ourſelves.

To be employed in the Service of an earthly Monarch is eſteemed, and deſervedly eſteemed, no ſmall Honor. With what Anxiouſneſs do we ſolicit their Employs! With what Alacrity diſcharge their Commands! Is it not

not a much greater Glory to ſerve the LORD OF LORDS, and fulfil the Pleaſure of the KING OF KINGS?—To exert ourſelves then in the Diffuſion of that glorious Light which was ſent to "lighten the Gentiles," is to ſhew ourſelves "faithful Stewards of God's Myſteries," and to prove ourſelves no leſs than the Inſtruments and Agents of the Almighty, to execute his Purpoſes, and perform his Work.

The univerſal Propagation of the Goſpel is one of thoſe Predictions, which ſtill remain to be accompliſhed; it being no leſs certain that the Goſpel of Chriſt is not yet univerſally known, than that it was intended to be ſo. For though "his Dominion was to be from Sea to Sea, "and from the Flood unto the World's End:" Though "all Kings were to fall down before him, and all Nations "to do him Service:" Though from "the Riſing of the "Sun, even unto the going down of the ſame, his "Name was to be great among the Gentiles;" yet vaſt Empires and mighty Nations have never yet been illumined by that SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and more than one half of the Globe lies ſunk in PAGAN Ignorance or MOHAMMEDAN Superſtition. The "Harveſt then "truly is plenteous—but the Labourers are few."—To ſow the "Seed" of God's Word therefore on every Ground, and propagate his Goſpel in every Clime—to "ſend forth Labourers into his Harveſt," is to be employed in the Service of the "Lord of the Harveſt,"

and

and is the moſt unequivocal Proof, we can give, of CHARITY to Man, and GRATITUDE to our Maker.

But, if "none of theſe Things move" us;—if CHARITY to our Fellow Creatures and GRATITUDE to God, two of the ſtrongeſt Principles in human Nature, cannot incite us to communicate to others the Benefits of the Goſpel, which "we have *happily* received, and wherein we ſtand;"—conſider, that it is alſo the expreſs Command of our Lord and Maſter, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf: "GO YE, AND "TEACH ALL NATIONS"—"GO YE, AND PREACH TO "EVERY CREATURE:"—a Commiſſion, which though particularly addreſſed to the Apoſtles, evidently could not be confined to them, ſeeing that, ſince their Days, new Worlds have been diſcovered, and whole Nations found out, that "knew not God, neither Jeſus Chriſt, "whom he hath ſent." Now the Scriptures expreſſly ſay, that "there is none *other* Name under Heaven, given "among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved, but the "Name of Jeſus Chriſt;" and that "whoſoever be-"lieveth on the Lord Jeſus ſhall not be aſhamed, and "whoſoever ſhall call upon the Name of the Lord ſhall "be ſaved."—"How then ſhall they call on him, in "whom they have not believed? And how ſhall they "believe on him, of whom they have not heard? And "how ſhall they hear without a Preacher? And how "ſhall they preach, except they be SENT?"—*Rom.* x. 14.

So

—Neither indeed can this Buſineſs be *ſtrictly* confined to the immediate Succeſſors of the Apoſtles only, and thoſe who are ordained to the Miniſtry of Chriſt's Religion; but is a Matter of general and univerſal Concern:— For, though "no Man taketh this Honor" of miniſtering "for Men, in Things pertaining to God, unto "himſelf, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron;" yet it is the Province and Duty of *every* Man to endeavour to "convert Sinners from the Error of their Ways, "and ſave their Souls from Death;"—it is an Obligation incumbent upon *every* one to help to "ſend forth La- "bourers into the Lord's Harveſt," and to make the "Kingdoms of this World become the Kingdoms of "our Lord and of his Chriſt."

We are *all* of us taught and commanded, by Chriſt himſelf, to pray that his "Kingdom may come;"—that his Dominion be extended, "until the Fulneſs of the "Gentiles be come in to the Kingdom of Chriſt:" For he "muſt reign till he hath put all Enemies under "his Feet."——Our Prayers therefore to God for what we neither wiſh nor endeavour to promote, are little leſs than ſolemn Mockery "againſt the Lord and againſt his "Anointed."—Like the Man in the Fable, unleſs we uſe every Exertion of our own Strength, it is Preſumption to ſolicit the Aſſiſtance of the Almighty to perform our Petitions.

By the pious Collections of that religious Society, which now ſolicits your Aid, there have been found Mi-

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niſters of the Religion of Jeſus, of that godly and perſevering Zeal, who have wandered over Mountains and Deſerts, "having their Feet ſhod with the Preparation "of the Goſpel of Peace;"—who have braved the Dangers of unruly Elements, have encountered the Inclemencies of foreign Climates, and ſurmounted the ſtill greater Obſtacles of barbarian Ignorance and Rudeneſs, to convince IDOLATERS, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Saviour of the World, "over all, God bleſſed for ever."

By the great and glorious Labors of theſe holy Heralds of Chriſt, his Doctrines have been proclaimed in the remoteſt Regions, and have enlightened and civilized ſome of the moſt ſavage People. Thouſands of INDIANS and NEGROES, who were "Worſhippers of thoſe which "are not Gods," and "followed after dumb Idols even "as they were led," have been inſtructed and baptized in our moſt holy Religion, and taught to worſhip the only "true and living God."—Agreeable to the Prediction of Chriſt himſelf, "many have come in from the Eaſt "and from the Weſt," have embraced the Faith, and performed the Works of the Goſpel, "and are ſat down "with Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom "of Heaven."

But alas! partly by the Increaſe of its own Expences, and partly by the Decay of that generous Spirit of Religion, which hath hitherto adorned and enriched this venerable Inſtitution, the Fund of the Society is become nearly

nearly exhauſted. To ſupport this goodly Pillar of Chriſt's Church, and prevent its Diſſolution and Decay, every Lover and Promoter of Chriſtianity muſt chearfully concur;—that ſo "the Church of the liv-"ing God, which is the Pillar and Ground of the "Truth, built by Chriſt upon a Rock," may be ſo ſecurely eſtabliſhed, "that the Gates of Hell ſhall not "prevail againſt it."

Many too of thoſe miſſionary Paſtors, whoſe pious Employments have been interrupted by the preſent unhappy Troubles in AMERICA, are now in a State of Perſecution, and have therefore a double Claim on your Charity and Protection. For how can you behold thoſe holy Men, who have "born" about "the Croſs of Chriſt," fainting under their Burden, and yet "ſhut up your Bow-"els of Compaſſion from them?" How can you ſee thoſe Champions of the common Cauſe, "thoſe La-"bourers in the Harveſt" of Chriſt, ſuffer "Hunger and "Thirſt, be naked, and ſick, and in Priſon;" and yet refuſe to caſt your MITE into this ſacred TREASURY, eſtabliſhed for their Maintenance and Relief?

And yet, ſtrange as it may ſeem, there are ſome who aſſert, that in the preſent State of Affairs, a Collection for Miſſionaries is, at leaſt unſeaſonable, if not abſurd *. But

* Another Objection may be, that this Application cannot now be neceſſary, after the liberal Contribution, which was raiſed for the diſtreſſed AMERICAN CLERGY, about three Years ago.—But the Collection, which was then made, was by private Application, and not by public Authority, and was intended for the preſent Relief of

—But how little do ſuch Men know of Juſtice or of Reaſon? What! is our Charity to abate, when the Wants of our Brethren are multiplied? Are they the *leſs* to be pitied, the *more* they are diſtreſſed? Are not Times of Tumult and Perſecution the moſt acceptable Seaſons for Conſolation and Support?—But, under God's good Providence, theſe Troubles may ſpeedily ceaſe; and 'that Monſter, REBELLION, which ſhould have 'been ſtifled in the Birth,' may exhauſt its Strength and expire. The God of Peace may ſoon "comfort his Peo-"ple and have Mercy upon his Afflicted;" and the Sword of Contention return to "its Scabbard, and reſt and be "ſtill."—(Iſ. xlix. and Jer. xlvii.)—And then what Satisfaction and Delight muſt it afford us to reflect, that, by our timely Aſſiſtance in "the Hour of Danger," we reſcued God's Servants out of the Hands "of the wicked ones," and have re-eſtabliſhed them in their religious Employs!

Beſides, in a great Part of our Colonies, the pious Functions of theſe holy Men are *ſtill* continued;† and a farther Extenſion of their Labors may perhaps be re-

of thoſe conſcientious Clergymen, who rather than betray their Duty, relinquiſhed their properties, and whoſe Families were, in general, left in the greateſt Diſtreſs.—It ſhould be remembered too, that the Clergymen, who have been relieved, were many of them, thoſe who had no Connection with the Society; being partly ſuch as had been ſupported by the Contribution of their Congregations, and partly ſuch as had a ſettled Maintenance in thoſe Provinces, in which there is an eſtabliſhed Proviſion for a Miniſtry of the Church of *England*.—*See the Biſhop of Worceſter's Circular Letter.*

† A great Part of the Provinces of *New York*, and *Rhode Iſland*, the entire Provinces of *Newfoundland*, *Nova Scotia*, *Georgia*, *Eaſt* and *Weſt Florida*, beſides the Miſſions at the *Bahama Iſlands*, the *Moſquito Shore* and *Africa*.—*Ibid.*

quired:

quired:—for ſuch is the gracious Univerſality of the Goſpel of Chriſt, that it "would have all Men to be "ſaved and come to the Knowledge of the Truth."—If then "we know our Lord's Will," ſhall we not exert our utmoſt Endeavours to fullfil the ſame? When we have the Means of promoting his Glory, and the Salvation of his Creatures, ſhall we not embrace the Opportunity with Alacrity and Joy?

With what unſhaken, tho' miſtaken, Zeal, did the Chriſtians of old maintain the Cauſe of Chriſt againſt Infidels "with the Arm of Fleſh"—and, with what unremitting Ardor, do they of the Romiſh Communion ſtill propagate their erroneous Doctrines, and "compaſs Sea and Land to make Proſelytes."—And ſhall WE of the reformed Church, who boaſt of being the trueſt Diſciples of a Maſter, whoſe Life and whoſe Doctrines breathe nothing but Charity and Love——who was "moved with Compaſſion, when he ſaw the Multitudes "that were ſcattered abroad, as Sheep having no Shep-"herd"——ſhall WE, I ſay, alone be wanting in this "moſt excellent Gift of Charity?"

I know indeed how little Good-Will the ill-natured World bears to Prieſts of all Denominations, and how grudgingly they ſpare them, even what the Laws of the Land have made their own. It was not ſo amongſt the Jews—it was not ſo amongſt the primitive Chriſtians.—

By the Jewiſh Laws little leſs than half of their whole Revenues was ſacred to thoſe, which "miniſtered about "holy Things" and other pious Deſigns—yet the *Jews* did not complain. The firſt Followers of Chriſt had "all Things common;" they even "ſold their Poſſeſſi-"ons and Goods, and laid them at the Apoſtle's Feet."

Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory is full of the Works of Charity, which adorned the primitive Chriſtians, and the Care and Expence they beſtowed in Propagation of the Faith, and Publication of the Goſpel. "Zealous Men, (we are told), "were collected, who went out to carry the "Goſpel even into *Phœnicia*; and having learnt that "there were People ſcattered abroad near the *Danube*, "who thirſted after the Waters of Grace; Men of an "ardent Zeal were ſought after, to labour, as the "Apoſtles had done, to the Edification of the Church." —Vide Theodor. Eccl. Hiſt. Book v. Chap. 29 and 31.

Let not the Jews then reproach us any longer with Want of Charity;* let not the Chriſtians of thoſe barbarous Ages ſo far ſurpaſs modern Refinement and Civilization in Works of Piety and Liberality; the two greateſt Criterions of a noble and exalted Soul.—We do not wiſh to take from you *one half of your Revenues*—

* One of the greateſt Stumbling Blocks in the Way of the Jews to their Entrance into Chriſtianity, is ſaid to be that Want of Charity, with which they ſtigmatize its Profeſſors.

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we do not desire you to *sell your Possessions and Goods, and lay them at our Feet:*—we only ask an Alms.—We do not deny you what your Necessities, your Families, and even your innocent Amusements, require:—we will be content with that superfluous Wealth, you waste on your inordinate Pleasures, your Luxuries, and Vice. And sure you will not refuse that to be employed in the Service of the Lord, which you spend in the Service of Satan?—You will not take the "Children's Bread and "and cast it unto Dogs?"

Consider that what you contribute on this Occasion, you grant to the Service of God; and may therefore be *strictly* said to "lend to the Lord."—It is God that asks, and will not Man lend an Ear?—It is Christ, who entreats, and will not Man bestow? "for verily I say un- "to you, inasmuch as ye do this unto one of the least of "these little ones, ye shall do it unto him."

Yet let us not imagine, that because he condescendeth to appear "in such great Humility," he therefore standeth in need of human Help: For "WHO AM I, AND WHAT ARE MY PEOPLE, THAT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO OFFER SO WILLINGLY AFTER THIS SORT? FOR ALL THINGS COME OF THEE, AND OF THINE OWN HAVE WE GIVEN THEE: THINE, O LORD, IS THE GREATNESS, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, AND THE VICTORY, AND THE MAJESTY: FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE HEAVEN, AND IN THE EARTH IS THINE; THINE IS THE KINGDOM, O LORD, AND THOU ART EXALTED AS HEAD ABOVE ALL. BOTH RICHES AND

AND HONOR COME OF THEE, AND THOU REIGNEST OVER ALL, AND IN THINE HAND IS POWER AND MIGHT, AND IN THINE HAND IT IS TO MAKE GREAT, AND TO GIVE STRENGTH UNTO ALL." 1 Chron. 29.—He "*suffereth* his People to be evil entreated through TYRANTS—to be miniſhed and brought low, through OPPRESSION"—only to prove *their* Fidelity, and manifeſt *your* Love.

Since therefore God is thus pleaſed to make Trial of our Affection, and bring our Charity to the Standard of Proof; let us take Care that we be not "weighed in the "Balance and found wanting."—But let the RICH caſt in LIBERALLY, out of their Abundance, to this TREASURY of God; and let the POOR ſpare ſomewhat out of their "Penury."—Even the Widow's Mite, like her Cruiſe of Oil, may feed a Prophet and herſelf too: thoſe, that "hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs," may be filled with the "Bread of Righteouſneſs," and drink out of "Ciſterns of living Waters, ſpringing up "into everlaſting Life."

FINIS.

[The Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Goſpel in Foreign Parts is the Rev. Mr. MORICE, at his Houſe in *Hatton Garden, London*.—The Treaſurer is JOHN BACON, Eſq; at the *Firſt Fruits Office* in the *Temple*.]

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